THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

Literary Miscellany.

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For the Evening Fire-side.

THE GLEANER, NO. XIV.

Of all the arts and quirks of argument,
This as most decisive bears away the palm:
'Tis calculated to impress with weight,
Each hector whose sole skill's in wordy torrent.
Come then, ye brave disputers, who contend
For nature's harmony, with passions unharmoniz'd,
Behold your coarser picture. These were wise
Almost as you,—they knew philosophy,
Could rail,—and reason about our system,
But inconclusive, all availed nought;
Neither would make concession, till by one
Dernier resort, the scene was closed with
"Demonstration" powerful.

A curious account of an astronomical dispute, is given us by a London paper of the 16th August, as follows:—"An ancient Briton named Griffith, was brought before the chief magistrate, charged with an assault and battery upon the person of a German Philosopher, who is also a dealer in cheese, sour-crout, smoked sausages, and other savoury viands; of which assault and battery the complainant exhibited the sad marks, in a pair of black eyes, and a countenance covered by the masterly strokes of an adept in pugilism.

"The German stated that he was in a public house on Wednesday night, in company with a number of persons, of whom Griffith was one; and that having had some warm disputes with a sawyer, who was not at present forthcoming, the conest was some time ended, when the sawyer, after cool and mature deliberation, stood up, and struck him with his fist on the eye; and that immediately afterwards the rest of the company, amongst whom was Griffith, entered into a very liberal subscription of the same kind of compliments, attacked him *en masse*, and beat him unmercifully.

Griffith, in his defence, gave quite a different version of the story, and from his statement, it appeared that the sawyer, who, it seemed, was also a philosopher, though of a different school, was very warmly engaged in an astronomical discussion with the German, touching the order of the system in which our earth is placed. The German obstinately maintained the doctrine of Tycho Brahe, that our earth is stationary, and that the sun and planets move round it, as a centre; while the sawyer, who is a disciple and champion of the Copernican school, maintained the doctrine of Newton, and the moderns. Much gin and beer were exhausted in the dispute, and much of learning and eloquence lavished on both sides.—The contest, at length, became too hot to be sustained by words, and the parties unable to bring each other to reason by the dint of argument, resorted at last to the *ultima ratio regum*. The sawyer told the German, that if he would promise not to take the law of him, he would knock him down. The German, sensible of his kindness, acceded to the proposal, which was immediately ratified, under the sign manual of the sawyer, upon the best eye of the German, who countersigned, in his turn, upon the nose of his antagonist. War being thus commenced, according to the law of arms, as laid down by Grotius, the battle waxed hot; and the sawyer, though the smallest, proving the better man, and too much for his antagonist in pugilistical logic, Griffith, as a mediator, stepped in to negociate a peace, if possible; and in endeavouring to separate the parties out of the focus of mutual attraction, the German seized a pewter pot, and with it proceeded to demonstrate, upon the head and arms of Griffith, a problem on the attraction and collision of bodies.

"The magistrate, after hearing the allegations and defence, dismissed the charge against Griffith, and told the complainant to find out the sawyer, as the proper object of his prosecution."

Q.

For the Evening Fire-side.

THE TEARS OF SCIENCE.

At the seat of instruction where once she was blest,
Fair Science sat mourning with sadness oppress'd.
Her maps and her volumes lay scatter'd around:
Her globes, all in fragments, were strew'd on the ground.
There lay, in rude tatters, the relics of sense;
The waste and destruction of genius immense.
She sigh'd, shook her head, and with anguish began,
Alas! for the boy when he thinks he's a man:
When his stature grows tall and his fingers begin,
To stroke the saft down that comes over his chin:
When he talks of assemblies, assumes a fine air,
Falls in love, as he calls it, and dreams of the fair.
This school, and these students, I claim'd as my own,
Here my precepts were utter'd, my maxims made known:
I open'd my treasures, around me they came,
And I rais'd their ambition for glory and fame.
I display'd the fair honors for wisdom design'd,
And the lasting content she bestows on the mind.
They heard me with rapture: I saw in their eyes
Fair hope, emulation, and genius arise.
I hail'd the glad omen! my children, I cri'd,
Let no pleasing objects your bosoms divide,
'Till crown'd with fair virtue, for glory design'd,
I bestow you a blessing and joy to mankind.
Ah! fond expectation! I saw with despair,
How soon they forsook me to wait on the fair.
While I talk'd of planets that roll thro' the skies,
Their minds were on dimples and beautiful eyes:
I laid down positions, and strove to explain;
They thought of Eliza, Louisa and Jane.
I saw a fine youth as apart he retir'd,
He seem'd with the ardour of science inspir'd,
His books and his pen were dispos'd in due place,
And deep lines of thinking were mark'd on his face.
Sweet hope, in my breast, was beginning to swell,
And I lov'd the dear boy that could study so well.
Nor shall my assistance be wanting I cri'd,
I'll crown thy exertions—and sprung to his side—
Alas! an acrostic! the verses were plann'd,
The name was all written, the letters were scann'd,
The initials arrang'd, to promote the design,
And his genius was working to get the first line.
I shut up my Euclid, I blush'd for myself,
I laid Blair and Murray again on the shelf
Disappointed, asham'd, and o'ercome with regret,
I utter'd a wish I shall never forget.
That all the dear maidens my counsels would prize,
And shun ev'ry lad till he's learned and wise.

B.

For the Evening Fire-side.

As to the curious naturaliſt, every unuſual occurrence in the hiſtory of animals, is peruſed with that intereſt which curioſity eſpecially inſpires, I am induced to communicate the following very ſingular fact, which was related to me by an old gentleman of undoubted veracity.—His ſon, who is a man of conſiderable reſpectability, had occaſion, not long ſince, to go from home one morning very early, perhaps to a neighbours on an errand: On his way he perceived, as he thought, a ſnake lying in the road before him, and immediately ſought to provide himſelf with a club in order to diſpatch the reptile: But upon a cloſer inſpection, he found that in reality it was not a ſnake, but a vaſt multitude of ſmall worms of a browniſh colour, and about one-third of an inch long, which were travelling in a form which ſo nearly reſembled that of a ſnake, that a leſs curious eye would not, perhaps, have diſcovered the difference. The ſnake, if we may ſo call it, was about eighteen inches in length; the head was ſhaped with a conſiderable degree of ſimilarity; the neck was ſomewhat ſmaller; the ſize increaſed towards the middle, then tapered off to a point for the tail; the back was ſomewhat rounded up by the worms being piled one upon another:—They did not all move at once, but each took his turn, the hinder ones filling up the vacancies which the foremoſt ones had left; ſo that the perfection of the ſhape was kept up by mutual conſent. They marched very ſlow. Our obſerver looked round to ſee if he could diſcover where they had come from; a ſmall wild cherry tree ſtood a few rods behind them; this he ſuppoſed to be the place from whence they had emigrated; but he could not conjecture where they could be going to. He had not leiſure at that time to watch their motions, which no doubt would have been highly gratifying to a curious mind. To ſee the order in which theſe reptiles moved, the perfect form of a ſnake which they had aſſumed, and the harmony that prevailed amongſt them, would have delighted even Pliny himſelf. Now, how theſe creatures ſhould have come to chooſe the form of a ſnake to travel in, is a matter not eaſily inveſtigated. Whether they had any knowledge that a ſnake was a deteſtable creature, and to be ſhunned by man and beaſt, or whether it was entirely the effect of chance, might be difficult to determine. We, however, think that ſuch perfection of ſimilarity can hardly be attributed to mere chance: It muſt have been a preconcerted ſcheme, determined upon before they left their former habitation: and may we not reaſonably conclude that a long council was held, in which the ableſt orators diſplayed their talents in recommending to the aſſembly the ſafeſt mode to travel in, to their new ſettlement.

WAGSTAFF.

For the Evening Fire-side.

O Happiness! thy sweets to know
We ramble o'er life's varied vale,—
Where Joy or Grief alternate flow—
As Hope or Fear the mind assail:

Joy—when by Hope with smiling mein—
We're led o'er paths inviting gay;
And Grief—when Fear pervades the scene—
And wild presages gloom the way!

At thee, some aim—unthinking, fire—
But shoot beyond thy summit quite,
Some, daring not to such aspire—
Shoot short—and just as far from right!

Alas! why need we nourish woes—
By treading doubt's perplexing way,
In search of good that plainly glows—
In pleasing virtue's simple ray?

Ah! why—possest of rosy health—
A decent competence beside;
Why need we wish increase of wealth,
Nor rest till such be gratified!

How vain the thought! alas—how vain!
Still further on our object lies!
Still further on we haste again—
But still the tempting bubble flies!

Nor pow'r, nor wealth, content bestows—
For, both obtain'd, we yet aspire!
And observation daily shews
Possession but promotes desire!

Each state alike, can bliss bestow—
If but the will is to be blest;
Then—happy they who learn to know
All peace reposes in the breast!

H.

For the Evening Fire-side.

THE PEDLAR: NO. XI.

"Get wisdom, get understanding."

The neceſſity of improving our talents and of acquiring an additional ſtock of knowledge beyond what nature furniſhes is ſo manifeſt, that the powers of reaſoning to render it more conſpicuous would be laviſhed in vain. It is the intereſt as well as duty of every rational being, to endeavour to enlarge his faculties and to expand the powers of his intellects by proper acquiſitions from the ſtorehouſe of knowledge; ſeeing that finally the requiſition will be made, "What have you done with the talent committed to your charge:" We are not to ſuppoſe that the leſſons of wiſdom are to be attained by ſupineneſs and inactivity. They are to be ſought for with care, and can only be acquired by the moſt diligent application.

"Our needful knowledge, like our needful food,
Unhedg'd, lies open in life's common field:"

And therefore none can plead excuſe, and ſay, that knowledge is beyond their reach or improvement out of the ſphere of their power.

"All have the means, but few the price will pay."

If in old age we expect to repoſe under the ſhades of the tree of knowledge, we muſt be careful to cultivate its growth in early life. Youth is the time that nature dictates, and it is the ſeaſon in which nature ſays a uſeful and entertaining ſtock ſhould be acquired. On this the mind at a future period, when diſengaged from buſineſs, can ruminate with joy and reaſon with ſatisfaction. How agreeable will be the reflection, when

"Life's gay hours are past,"

looking back with the teſtimony of a good conſcience, to ſay we have to the utmoſt of our power been endeavouring to improve our talents—to ſtore our minds with the maxims of wiſdom, and to exalt our underſtandings through the medium of ſtudy and meditation.

FIRE,

For the Fire-ſide.

There is nothing about which newſpaper writers are more anxious than to dignify the account of a fire. The plain and direct expreſſions are ſo ſimple and ſo brief, that they are by no means ſatisfied with them. They muſt amplify and decorate the diſaſtrous narrative as much as poſſible, and for this end, they deal in circuitous and pompous phraſes, in affecting epithets and metaphors. I have often been amuſed at their laborious attempts to be ſolemn and eloquent on theſe occaſions.

For inſtance;—the ſtory to be told is, that at ſuch a time and place, a fire broke out and burnt or deſtroyed ſuch and ſuch buildings.

They diſdain ſo ſtraight a path as this, and will ramble very ingeniouſly thus:—"The citizens were diſturbed by the alarm of fire;" or (as an Albany Editor once had

it) "the peaceful ſlumbers of the inhabitants were broken by vociferated fire!"—"In ſpite of the exertions of the citizens, ſuch and ſuch buildings were ſwallowed up by the conflagration; or, (ſtill more poetically) "became victims to the devouring element:" or, "fell a prey to the remorſeleſs fury of the flames."

A late newſpaper introduces a column of ſuch news by this ſentence—"We are ſorry to announce to our readers, the devaſtation committed laſt night by the devouring element of fire." In the enſuing narrative we are told, that the "rage of the conflagration was appeaſed," at ſuch an hour, and that ſuch a part of the town was "ſnatched from the *graſp* of the *devouring element*."

FIREMAN.

For the Evening Fire-side.

A correſpondence between Eſculapius and Amanda, in conſequence of the former expreſſing to the latter an apprehenſion of her being indiſpoſed on account of Love.

TO DOCTOR ———

THE CASE OF AMANDA.

Good Doctor, with a piteous face,
I come to tell my hapleſs caſe.
You boaſt ſuch moſt amazing ſkill
That you can cure me if you will.
I love, alas, too well I know,
I love a moſt enchanting Beau;
The ſad diſorder grows apace,
And clouds with care my every grace.
* * * * * *
I'll ſtate my feeling firſt of all
Know then, a moſt tormenting pain
Shoots frequent through my head and brain;
My memory ſhort; my pulſe is low;
I dream of Cupid and his bow;
For ſeveral hours I ſit and ſigh,
And the tear trickles from my eye;
Whene'er I paſs a ſhady grove,
I think upon the ſwain I love;
A ſeat beneath a willow tree
Is a mere Paradiſe to me;
A Love-Song or romantic Tale
Of Ralph or Nancy of the Vale;
Wakes the ſoft impulſe in my breaſt,
And robs my ſickened ſoul of reſt;
And when I uſe the trembling quill
To write of Fountain or of Rill,
Or dedicate a tuneful line
To any female friend of mine,
The treacherous plume at random ſtrays
And branches forth in Damon's praiſe:
Theſe are my maladies, I own,
Diſcover'd to yourſelf alone.
And now, good Doctor, pray preſcribe,
And I'll prepare the glittering bribe.

TO AMANDA.

Amanda, with pity I've read
The tale of the woes you endure,
And have more than once puzzled my head
In attempting to find our a cure;

But, alas, if my patient complain,
And tell of her pangs with ſuch art,
I muſt ne'er boaſt of healing again,
But endeavour to ſhield my own heart.

What noſtrum, ye gods, can remove,
What pill or what potion allay,
The heart-rending ſorrows of love
Or drive their remembrance away?

Thus vex'd and dejected, I cry'd,
As idly I ſaunter'd along,
When, encircled with glory, I 'ſpy'd
The Genius of Phyſic and Song.

On the breeze of the morning he ſail'd,
The muſes attended his car,
While odours celeſtial prevail'd
Throughout the wide regions of air.

Fond mortal, thy labour is vain,
With ineffable ſweetneſs he ſaid,
No relief can Amanda obtain,
From all the receipts in thy head.

But far in the Eaſt, where I riſe,
A ſkilful phyſician ſhe'll find,
And, to him if Amanda applies,
She'll recover her calmneſs of mind.

TO ESCULAPIUS.

Can I journey afar in the Eaſt
This medical genius to find,
Who's to act as phyſician and prieſt,
And preſcribe for both body and mind?

'Twas a cruel invention of your's
To evade what you once undertook,
Since you cannot perform any cures
But what are ſet down in your book.

Of phyſicians an envious band
Shall ſnatch the young bay from your head,
And wide o'er Columbia's land
The report of your ſhame ſhall be ſpread.

I'll tell the fair victims of love,
Who complain of the pangs they endure,
That the Doctor of Hickory grove
May wound, but he never can cure.

There's only one mean in your power
To prevent this aſſemblage of ill;
Which is, that in this very hour
You engage to comply with my will:

Bid the ſon of Latona prepare
A robe of cerulean dye,
Or a ſtill brighter veſtment of air,
And convey the young ſage through the ſky

Then, ſhould he a recipe ſhew
That will yield me contentment of mind,
On him the reward I'll beſtow,
And hope you won't take it unkind.

For, alas, I have nothing to give
But my hand and an innocent heart,
Which he never would deign to receive
Had I offer'd another a part.

TO AMANDA.

Amanda, I cannot conceal
How much I admire and approve
The frankneſs with which you reveal,
Since you find you can't conquer your love.

How many a fair one has pin'd,
And travell'd through life all alone,
Before ſhe'd unburthen her mind,
Or make her uneaſineſs known!

But no longer ſhall cuſtom prevail
In defiance of reaſon and ſenſe;
Amanda has dar'd to aſſail
The monſter, and baniſh'd him hence.

Deſpiſing the hypocrite's art,
She offers, explicit and clear,
To give up her hand and her heart
The moment her ſwain ſhall appear!

Then, Damon, ah, ſhorten thy ſtay;
Leave the Eaſt and its treaſures behind;
This inſtant thy canvas diſplay,
And fly on the wings of the wind!

What pleaſure has man here below
So extatic, ſo nearly divine,
As in ſtemming the torrent of wo?
And that pleaſure, bleſt youth, may be thine.

To the cell of the mourner repair,
The demon of anguiſh control,
Diſpel the dark clouds of deſpair,
And whiſper ſweet peace to her ſoul.

(To be concluded in our next.)

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY.

[*Concluded from our laſt.*]

There is a tract of country upon the border of Northumberland, called *Readsdale* and *Tine-dale*, of all barbarous places in the north, at that time the moſt barbarous. Before the Union, this place was called the *debateable-land*, as ſubject by turns to England and Scotland, and the common theatre when the two nations were continually acting their bloody ſcenes. It was inhabited by a kind of deſperate banditti, rendered fierce and active by conſtant alarms: they lived by theft, and uſed to plunder on both ſides of the barrier; and what they plundered on one, they expoſed to ſale on the other; by that means eſcaping juſtice. And in this dreadful country, where no man would ever travel that could help it, Mr. Gilpin never failed to ſpend ſome part of every year.

He generally choſe the chriſtian holydays for his journey, becauſe he found the people at that ſeaſon moſt diſengaged, and moſt eaſily aſſembled. He had ſet places for preaching, which were as regularly attended as the aſſize towns of a circuit. If he came where there was a church, he made uſe of it: if not, of barns or any other large building; where great crowds of people were ſure to attend him, ſome for his inſtructions, and others for his charity.—This was a very difficult and laborious employment. The country was ſo poor, that what proviſion he could get, extreme hunger only could make palatable. The inclemency of the weather, and the badneſs of the roads, through a mountainous country, and at that ſeaſon covered with ſnow, expoſed him likewiſe often to great hardſhips. Sometimes he was overtaken by the night, the country being in many places deſolate for ſeveral miles together, and obliged to lodge out in the cold. At ſuch times, we are told, he would make his ſervant ride about with his horſes; while himſelf on foot uſed as much exerciſe as his age and the fatigues of the preceding day would permit. All this he cheerfully underwent; eſteeming ſuch ſervices well compenſated by the advantages which he hoped might accrue from them to his uninſtructed fellow creatures.

The diſintereſted pains he took among theſe barbarous people, and the good offices he was always ready to do them, drew from them the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude. Indeed he was little leſs than adored among them, and might have brought the whole country almoſt to what he pleaſed. One inſtance that is related, ſhews how greatly he was revered. By the careleſſneſs of his ſervants, his horſes were one day ſtolen. The news was quickly propagated, and every one expreſſed the higheſt indignation at the fact. The thief was rejoicing over his prize, when by the report of the country he found whole horſes he had taken. Terrified at what he had done, he inſtantly came trembling back, confeſſed the fact, returned the horſes, and declared he believed the devil would have ſeized him directly, had he carried them off knowing them to have been Mr. Gilpin's.

We have already taken notice of Mr. Gilpin's uncommonly generous and hoſpitable manner of living. The value of his rectory was about 400 pounds a year: an income, indeed at that time very conſiderable, and yet in appearance very unappropriate to the generous things he did: indeed he could not have done them, unleſs his frugality had been equal to his generoſity. His friends, therefore, could not but wonder to find him, amidſt his great and continual expences, entertain the deſign of building and endowing a grammar-ſchool: a deſign, however, which his exact economy ſoon enabled him to accompliſh, though the expence of it amounted to upwards of 500 pounds. His ſchool was no ſooner opened, than it begun to flouriſh; and there was ſo great a reſort of young people to it, that in a little time the town was not able to accommodate them. He put himſelf, therefore, to the inconvenience of fitting up a part of his own houſe for that purpoſe, when he ſeldom had fewer than 20 or 30 children. Some of theſe were the ſons of perſons of diſtinction, whom he boarded at eaſy rates: but the greateſt part were poor children, whom he not only educated, but clothed and maintained; he was at the expence likewiſe of boarding in the town many other poor children. He uſed to bring ſeveral every year from the different parts where he preached, particularly Raids-dale and Tine-dale; which places he was at great pains in civilizing and contributing not a little towards rooting out that barbariſm, which every year prevails leſs among them.

As to the ſchool, he not only placed able maſters in it, whom he procured from Oxford, but himſelf likewiſe conſtantly inſpected it. And that encouragement might quicken the application of his boys, he always took particular notice of the moſt forward: he would call them *his own ſcholars*, and would ſend for them often into his ſtudy, and there inſtruct them himſelf. One method uſed by him to fill his ſchool, was a little ſingular. Whenever he met a poor boy upon the road, he would make trial of his capacity, by a few queſtions, and if he found it ſuch as pleaſed him, he would provide for his education. And beſides thoſe whom he ſent from his own ſchool to the univerſities, and there wholly maintained, he would likewiſe give to others, who were in circumſtances to do ſomething for themſelves, what farther aſſiſtance they needed. By which means he induced many parents to allow their children a liberal education, who otherwiſe would not have done it. And Mr. Gilpin did not think it enough to afford the means only of an academical education to theſe young people, but endeavoured to make it as beneficial to them as he could. He ſtill conſidered himſelf as their proper guardian; and ſeemed to think himſelf bound to the public for their being made uſeful members of it, as far as lay in his power to make them ſo. With this view he held a punctual correſpondence with their tutors; and made the youths themſelves frequently write to him, and give him an account of their ſtudies. So ſolicitous indeed was he about them, knowing the many temptations to which their age and ſituation expoſed them, that once every other year he generally made a journey to the univerſities to inſpect their behaviour. And this uncommon care was not unrewarded; for many of his ſcholars became ornaments to the church, and exemplary inſtances of piety.

To the account that hath been already given of Mr. Gilpin's hoſpitality and benevolence, the following particulars may be added. Every Thurſday throughout the year, a very large quantity of meat was dreſſed wholly for the poor; and every day they had what quantity of broth they wanted. Twenty-four of the pooreſt were his conſtant penſioners. Four times in the year a dinner was provided for them; when they received from his ſtewart a certain quantity of corn and a ſum of money, and at Chriſtmas they had always an ox divided among them.

Whenever he heard of any diſtreſs, whether of his own pariſh or any other, he was ſure to relieve them. In his walks abroad, he would frequently bring home with him poor people, and ſend them away clothed as well as fed. He took great pains to inform himſelf of the circumſtances of his neighbours, that the modeſty of the ſufferer might not prevent his relief.—But the money beſt laid out was in his opinion that which encouraged induſtry. It was one of his greateſt pleaſures to make up the loſſes of his laborious neighbours, and prevent their ſinking under them. If a poor man had loſt a beaſt, he would ſend him another in his room: or if any farmer had had a bad year, he would make him an abatement in his tythes. Thus as far as he was able, he took the misfortunes of his pariſh upon himſelf; and like a true ſhepherd, expoſed himſelf for his flock. But of all kinds of induſtrious poor, he was moſt forward to aſſiſt thoſe who had large families; ſuch never failed to meet with his bounty, when they wanted to ſettle their children in the world.

In the diſtant pariſhes where he preached as well as in his own neighbourhood, his generoſity and benevolence were continually ſhewing themſelves; particularly in the deſolate parts of Northumberland.—"When he began his journey," ſays an old

manuſcript life of him, "he would have 10 pounds in his purſe, and at his coming home, he would be 20 nobles in debt, which he would always pay within a fortnight after." In the goals he viſited, he was not only careful to give the priſoners proper inſtructions, but uſed to purchaſe for them what neceſſaries they wanted.

Even upon the public road he never let ſlip an opportunity of doing good. He has often been known to take off his cloak and give it to a half-naked traveller: and when he has had ſcarce money enough in his pocket to provide himſelf a dinner, yet would he give away part of that little, or the whole, if he found any who ſeemed to ſtand in need of it. Of this benevolent temper, the following inſtance is preſerved. One day returning home, he ſaw in a field ſeveral people crowding together, and judging ſomething more than ordinary had happened, he rode up, and found that one of the horſes in a team had ſuddenly dropped down, which they were endeavouring to raiſe, but in vain, for the horſe was dead. The owner of it ſeemed much dejected with his misfortune; and declaring how grievous a loſs it would be to him, Mr. Gilpin bade him not be diſheartened: "I'll let you have (ſays he) honeſt man, that horſe of mine," and pointed to his ſervant's. "Ah maſter (replied the countryman,) my pocket will not reach ſuch a beaſt as that." "Come, come (ſaid Mr. Gilpin) take him, take him; and when I demand my money, then thou ſhalt pay me." This worthy and excellent divine, who merited and obtained the glorious titles of the *Father of the Poor*, and *Apoſtle of the North*, died in 1583, in the 66th year of his age.

[*Encyclopedia.*]

Tranſlation of the 3d Ode of the 2d Book of Horace.

TO DELLIUS.

In proſperous as in adverſe times thou'lt find,
'Tis beſt to keep an equal temperate mind.
When fortune favours be not too elate,
For thou, O Dellius, muſt ſubmit to fate:
Whether in ſorrow thou thy time doſt paſs,
Or, as recumbent on the tender graſs,
On ſolemn days in mirth thou ſpend'ſt thy time
Bleſt with thy friends and good Falernian Wine,
Where the tall pine, and poplar, lend their aid,
By boughs entwin'd to form a pleaſant ſhade.
Here have the wine; the ſhort-lived roſes bring,
While the dread fates prolong the vital ſtring.

For thou, ſubmiſſive to death's dire command,
Muſt leave thy groves, thy houſes and thy land;
Rapacious heirs will then thy wealth enjoy,
Which did, in heaping ſo much time employ.

Whether thou'rt rich and of a noble birth,
Or poor; and lodgeſt on the cold bare earth,
It matters not; thou muſt reſign thy breath,
At the dread call of all devouring death.

All human kind to one concluſion tend,
Sooner or later our frail life muſt end.

Selected for the Evening Fire-ſide.

Biography is, of the various kinds of narrative writing, that which is moſt eagerly read, and moſt eaſily applied to the purpoſes of life.

In Romances, when the wild field of poſſibility lies open to invention, the incidents may eaſily be made more numerous, the viciſſitudes more ſudden, and the events more wonderful; but from the time of life when fancy begins to be over-ruled by reaſon and corrected by experience, the moſt artful tale raiſes little curioſity when it is known to be falſe; though it may perhaps, be ſometimes read as a model of a neat or elegant ſtile, not for the ſake of knowing what it contains, but how it is written; or thoſe that are weary of themſelves, may have recourſe to it as a pleaſing dream, of which, when they awake, they voluntarily diſmiſs the images from their minds.

The examples and events of hiſtory preſs, indeed, upon the mind with the weight of truth; but when they are repoſited in the memory, they are oftener employed for ſhew than uſe, and rather diverſify converſation than regulate life. Few are engaged in ſuch ſcenes as give them opportunities of growing wiſer by the downfal of Statemen or the defeat of Generals. The ſtratagems of war, and the intrigues of courts, are read by far the greater part of mankind with the ſame indifference as the adventures of fabled Heroes, or the revolutions of a Fairy Region. Between falſehood and uſeleſs truth there is little difference. As gold which he cannot ſpend will make no man rich, ſo knowledge which he cannot apply will make no man wiſe.

The miſchievous conſequences of vice and folly, of irregular deſires and predominant paſſions, are beſt diſcovered by thoſe relations which are levelled with the general ſurface of life, which tell not how any man became great, but how he was made happy; not how he loſt the favour of his prince, but how he became diſcontented with himſelf.

Thoſe relations are therefore commonly of moſt value in which the writer tells his own ſtory. He that recounts the life of another, commonly dwells moſt upon conſpicuous events, leſſens the familiarity of his tale to increaſe its dignity, ſhews his favourite at a diſtance, decorated and magnified like the ancient actors in their tragic dreſs, and endeavours to hide the man that he may produce a hero.

But if it be true which was ſaid by a French prince, 'That no man was a hero to the ſervants of his chamber,' it is equally true that every man is yet leſs a hero to himſelf. He that is moſt elevated above the crowd by the importance of his employments or the reputation of his genius, feels himſelf affected by fame or buſineſs but as they influence his domeſtic life. The high and low, as they have the ſame faculties and the ſame ſenſes, have no leſs ſimilitude in their pains and pleaſures. The ſenſations are the ſame in all, though produced by very different occaſions. The prince feels the ſame pain when an invader ſeizes a province, as the farmer when a thief drives away his cow. Men thus equal in themſelves will appear equal in honeſt and impartial biography; and thoſe whom fortune or nature place at the greateſt diſtance, may afford inſtruction to each other.

The writer of his own life has at leaſt the firſt qualification of an hiſtorian, the knowledge of the truth; and though it may be plauſibly objected that his temptations to diſguiſe it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartiality may be expected with equal confidence from him that relates the paſſages of his own life, as from him that delivers the tranſactions of another.

Certainty of knowledge not only excludes miſtake, but fortifies veracity. What we collect by conjecture, and by conjecture only can one man judge of another's motives or ſentiments, is eaſily modified by fancy or by deſire; as objects imperfectly diſcerned, take forms from the hope or fear of the beholder. But that which is fully known cannot be falſified but with reluctance of underſtanding, and alarm of conſcience: of underſtanding, the lover of truth; of conſcience, the ſentinel of virtue.

He that writes the life of another is either his friend or his enemy; and wiſhes either to exalt his praiſe or aggravate his infamy; many temptations to falſehood will occur in the diſguiſe of paſſions, too ſpecious to fear much reſiſtance. Love of virtue will animate panegyric, and hatred of wickedneſs embitter cenſure. The zeal of gratitude, the ardour of patriotiſm, fondneſs for an opinion, or fidelity to a party, may eaſily overpower the vigilance of a mind habitually well diſpoſed, and prevail over unaſſiſted and unfriended veracity.

But he that ſpeaks of himſelf has no motive to falſehood or partiality except ſelf-love, by which all have ſo often been betrayed, that all are on the watch againſt its artifices. He that writes an apology for a ſingle action, to confute an accuſation, to recommend himſelf to favour, is indeed always to be ſuſpected of favouring his own cauſe; but he that ſits down calmly and voluntarily to review his life for the admonition of poſterity, or to amuſe himſelf, and leaves this account unpubliſhed, may be commonly preſumed to tell truth, ſince falſehood cannot appeaſe his own mind, and fame will not be heard beneath the tomb.

[*The Idler.*]

From the Literary Magazine.

CHEMICAL QUESTION.

The oxalic acid, it is well known, can be produced by oxygenating common white ſugar, powdered, by means of the nitric acid: in this proceſs, part of the oxygen of the nitric acid unites to the carbon and hydrogen (the other conſtituent parts) of the ſugar, and the nitrous acid eſcapes.—This ſubſtance, according to Lavoiſier, conſiſts of 8 parts of hydrogen, 64 of oxygen, and 28 of carbon. *Theſe* are alſo the ingredients of the *oxalic* acid, but the proportions in which they exiſt, yet remain unknown: hence it is evident, that ſugar, by the addition of a certain quantity of oxygen, becomes converted into the oxalic acid.

Now ſugar is generally ſuppoſed to be injurious to the teeth: how far this opinion is ſupported by truth, will be ſeen from the following conſiderations. The teeth are compoſed of lime united to the phoſphoric acid, or are *phoſphates of lime*. Oxalic acid poſſeſſes a greater affinity with the baſe of this ſalt, and wherever it meets with it, unites to it, and ſeparates the other acid. Sugar is, by ſome, ſuppoſed to act in this manner:—the oxalic acid unites to the lime of the phoſphate of lime, and forms an inſoluble ſalt, and thus the teeth *decay*, or become decompoſed: but does ſugar really contain the *oxalic acid ready formed?* for if this is not the caſe, how can it decompoſe them? A ſolution of ſugar *will not* precipitate lime from lime-water, and hence it is clearly proved that it *cannot* exiſt in this ſubſtance; for lime, either in ſimple ſolution, or in combination with other ſubſtances, is reckoned the beſt teſt of this acid chemiſts have. How then does ſugar act on the teeth? It is proved by experiment, that if a ſmaller portion of oxygen is added to ſugar, than what would be neceſſary to convert it into the oxalic, the tartarous or ſome other vegetable acid would be formed: none of which have ſo great an attraction for lime, as the oxalic poſſeſſes. Can, therefore, ſugar be prejudicial to the teeth? if ſo, in what manner does it act?

The ſolution of the above queſtion, is requeſted from ſome of the ſcientific readers of his Magazine.

AMICUS SCIENTIÆ.

Deſcription of the Falls of Niagara. Extracted from the Journal of a Gentleman, who viſited them, a few years ſince.

The Falls are formed by a general deſcent of the country between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, of about 300 feet, the ſlope of which is generally very ſteep, and in many places almoſt perpendicular. This general deſcent of the country is obſervable for about 100 miles to the E. and above 200 miles to the W. or rather N. W. of the Falls.

The ſlope is formed by horizontal ſtrata of ſtone, great part of which is lime-ſtone. At Fort Erie, which is 20 miles above the cataract, the current is ſometimes ſo ſtrong, that it is impoſſible to croſs the river in the ferry-boat. Proceeding downwards, the rapidity of the ſtream increaſes. It may, however, generally be croſſed by hard rowing in a boat, oppoſite to the mouth of the Chippewa Creek. As we rode along the St. Laurence (viz. from Fort-Erie, on the Canada ſide), we heard the ſound of the Falls, at the diſtance of ten miles. The wind was N. E. and the air clear: had it been N. W. we ſhould have heard it at a much greater diſtance. In heavy weather, and with a fair wind, the ſound is ſometimes heard 40 or 50 miles.

The Rapids, or Firſt Falls, begin about half a mile above the great Cataract. In one inſtance has a man been ſaved, who had been carried down to them. His canoe was overturned: he retained faſt hold of it, and it very providentially faſtened itſelf to the uppermoſt rock. Some people on ſhore, ſeeing this, ventured to his aſſiſtance, and ſaved his life, at the riſk of their own.

As we approached the Falls the firſt time, the ſun was low in the weſt, which gave us an opportunity of viewing the beautiful rainbow, which is occaſioned by the refraction of his rays, on the cloud or fog, that is perpetually ariſing from them. We afterwards found, that the whole phenomenon is never viewed to ſo much advantage, from the Canada ſide, as in a clear evening. The vaſt fog, aſcending from the grand cataract, being in conſtant agitation, appears like the ſtream of an immenſe boiling cauldron. In ſummer, it moiſtens the neighbouring meadows, and in winter, falling upon the trees, it congeals, and produces a moſt beautiful cryſtaline appearance. The view of this fog at a diſtance, which, when the cauſe of it is known, is in itſelf a ſingular phenomenon, fills the mind with awful expectation, which, on a nearer approach, can never end in diſappointment.

The firſt ſight of the Falls arreſts the ſenſes in ſilent admiration. Their various hues, ariſing from the depth, the deſcent, and the agitation of the water, and the reflection of the ſun-beams upon them; their great height; their poſition between lofty rocks, and their roaring noiſe, altogether render them an unparalleled diſplay of nature's grandeur. But what chiefly diſtinguiſhes them, and gives them a majeſty incomparably ſuperior to any thing of the kind, in the known world, is the vaſt body of water which they precipitate into an immenſe abyſs.

The St. Laurence is one of the greateſt rivers of America. It is very deep, and about 742 yards wide at the Falls. The perpendicular deſcent there is about 140 feet, down to the level of the water below. How far the water ruſhes downwards, ſtill further within the chaſm underneath, is uncertain. It falls 58 feet within the laſt half mile above the Falls, which adds to the force and velocity of the cataract. The ſound occaſioned by the great and precipitate fall of ſuch a vaſt body of water, has the moſt grand effect that can be conceived. It far exceeds in ſolemnity any other ſound produced by the operations of nature. It is only at the Niagara Falls that the force of that figure made uſe of in the book of *Revelations* can be fully felt: "I heard a voice as the voice of many waters." And what did that voice ſay? It proclaimed aloud, as if all Heaven ſpoke, "Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." This is the language that has been thundered, for ages, from the Falls of Niagara.

Every hour of the day, and every change of the weather, varies the ſcenery of this romantic, this magnificent diſplay of the wonders of nature, compared with which, every attempt of art to produce the ſublime, ſinks into utter inſignificance. The

firſt day that we ſpent there, the weather was clear. The next day, it became cloudy, and rained a little. As we were deſirous to enjoy the proſpect before us from every poſſible point of view, we went down the high bank, below the cataract, into the immenſe chaſm below, and from thence walked, or rather climbed, along the rocks ſo near the cataract till it appeared ready to overwhelm us.

The deſcent, though ſteep, is not dangerous. General Simcoe, the late governor of the province, cauſed a ladder to be fixed in the moſt perpendicular part of it, which is ſo ſafe, that his lady ventured to go down it. Below the air is, in ſome places, ſtrongly-tainted with the ſmell of dead fiſh, which lie in great numbers on the beach. Every creature that ſwims down the rapids, is inſtantly hurried to deſtruction. We had ſeen a loon a little above them, which was, unknowingly, approaching ſwiftly to its ruin. Even birds, which fly above them, are frequently impelled downwards by the ſtrong current of the air, as their ſhattered fragments among the rocks do atteſt*.

When the river is low, it is eaſy to walk up to the foot of the Falls: but when high, one has to climb over rocks and piles of large looſe ſtones, for near half a mile. This laſt was the caſe when we were there. In many places, the impending maſſes of ſtone ſeemed ready to fall upon us.

It is known that the Falls are divided into the Great and Leſſer Falls, by means of a lofty Iſland between them. At the place of deſcent, we were nearly oppoſite to the Leſſer Falls, the waters of which ruſh down in a direction nearly parallel with the beach we walked along. They are again divided into two very unequal falls, the leaſt of which probably diſcharges more water than the great fall of the Rhine in Switzerland, which is the moſt famous water-fall in Europe.

We now approached the Great Fall, which diſcharges at leaſt four times as much water as the two leſſer ones together. It is nearly in the form of a horſe-ſhoe. We obſerved below, what is imperceptible above, that this fall has not throughout the ſame pitch. In the hollow of it, where the greateſt body of water deſcends, the rocks ſeem to be conſiderably worn away. We cannot, however, ſubſcribe to the opinion, that the cataract was formerly at the northern ſide of the ſlope, near the Landing; and that from the great length of time, the quantity of water, and the diſtance which it falls, the ſolid ſtone is worn away, for about nine miles up the river, towards Lake Erie.

This notion ſeems extravagant. The iſland which ſeparates the Falls is a ſolid rock, and ſo high, that the river can never have run over it. Its bank towards the Falls runs in the ſame direction with them, and at the ſame time does not project beyond them, which would, ſurely, be the caſe, if the whole body of rocks, from which the water deſcends, was faſt wearing away. The ſituation and appearance of the Falls is exactly the ſame as deſcribed and delineated by the French artiſts, 160 years ago. Beſides, according to the laws of motion, the principal preſſure of the water here muſt be in the direction in which it moves, and conſequently not againſt the rocks it merely flows over, and where it meets with no oppoſition. There is leſs probability of the bottom wearing away here than in any other river of equal depth, where there are no ſuch falls: for where the current is ſo very ſtrong, the preſſure downwards muſt thereby be conſiderably diminiſhed. And, for the ſame reaſon, the water being ejected far beyond the precipice, acts with little force againſt its edge. How then can it wear or bear it away for miles, even in the greateſt length of time? If the ſolid ſtone at the Falls had been carried away at ſo monſtrous a rate as is ſuppoſed by ſome, it might be expected that the Rapids would, in length of time, become ſmooth, or vary their appearance, which has not been obſerved to be the caſe.

That the perpendicular deſcent of ſuch a a vaſt body of water, has produced an immenſe chaſm below, is more than probable; and that where the greateſt quantity of it falls, the ſurface of the rocks may, in great length of time, have become more hollow, is very credible. But it appears difficult for us to conceive, that, in any known period, an immenſe bed of rocks ſhould have been ſo completely worn away, for nine miles, that no veſtige ſhould be left of them; and the Falls exhibit, at length, their preſent appearance. An old Indian told us, that many years ſince a grey-headed Chipewa had ſaid to him, "the white people believe, that the Falls were once down at the Landing. It is not true. They were always where they are now. So we have heard from our forefathers." We are led, therefore, to conclude, that the Niagara Falls received their preſent ſingular poſition at * * * * * * * *

It is generally ſuppoſed, becauſe the aſſertion has frequently appeared in print, that it is poſſible to go behind the deſcending column of water at the Falls, and to remain there, in perfect ſafety. Converſation, it has been ſaid, may be held there, without interruption from the noiſe, which is leſs there than at a conſiderable diſtance. People who live near the ſpot have daily to contradict theſe fables. They have themſelves been repeatedly as far as poſſible under the Falls, and are in the habit of conducting ſtrangers there. Their information is, therefore, to be relied on.

Under the Table-Rock (as it is called), from a part of which the water deſcends, there is, it is true, ſpace ſufficient to contain a great number of people, in perfect ſafety. But how ſhould they get there? Were they to attempt to enter the cavity, behind the Fall, the very current of the air (as the guides ſay), even were the ſtream of water not to touch them, would deprive them of life. The truth is, it is poſſible to go under, that is, below the Falls, as we did, but not to go behind them.

The motion of the water, below the cataract, is, as may be ſuppoſed, extremely wild and irregular: and it remains ſo down to the Landing. As far as the fog extends, it is impoſſible to judge of the ſtate of the atmoſphere with reſpect to heat and cold: in ſummer it cools it; and in winter renders it milder. The ſurrounding country, on the Canada ſide, is very delightful, affording charming ſtations for pleaſure-grounds, from whence the Falls might be viewed to advantage. On this account, as well as for the ſake of trade, the land here will probably, at ſome future period, ſell for a very high price. It is at preſent (1798) valued at £10. an acre.

The banks around the Falls are lined with white pine (Pinus ſtrobus), and cedar (Thuya occidentalis).

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Additional notice concerning the Falls. Communicated to the Editor, in September, 1801.

I am ſituated 24 miles eaſt of Niagara Falls. I frequently hear them roar at this diſtance, and ſee the volumes of clouds they pour into the heavens I lately ſpent an afternoon in contemplating them, in one of Mr. Painter's fields, about half a mile below the great pitch. This appears much the moſt eligible ſituation to contemplate their magnificence. Here I diſcovered, that viewing them with an inverted eye, gives them all the delicacy, and the luxuriant tints of the *camera obſcura*. Lake Erie, all laſt ſpring and ſummer, has been

* Perhaps these were the fragments of water fowl, in which case the above remark is incorrect.

about two feet higher than common: but I can not perceive, that this excefs of water cauſes any viſible change in the appearance of the Falls. Many travellers of the firſt reſpectability, from the United States, and Europe, have viſited them this ſeaſon.

MR. JAMES W. STEVENS.

[*Med. and Phyſ. Jour.*]

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

Aſpect of Foreign News.

Of the intelligence lately received from Europe, the following may not be deemed an incorrect compariſon:—

WAR.

It is certain that the Camp, formed in the vicinity of Paris, and to which other regular troops were haſtening, from their ſeveral poſitions in Germany, has been broken up, and the whole body ordered to re-enter the new formed States of that Empire

It is certain, that the States, which form the New Federation of the Rhine, have been ordered to furniſh their quota of troops, agreeable to the ſtipulations made with France.

It is certain, that inſtead of diſmiſſing any part of the regular army, even that claſs of ſoldiers whoſe age and ſervices entitled them to repoſe, Bonaparte has ordered a new and very formidable army of conſcripts to be raiſed, and equipped for immediate ſervice.

It is certain that a ſerious miſunderſtanding exiſts between the French and Pruſſian governments; that the latter power had ſettled its differences with Sweden; had reſtored a ſection of the Hanoverian dominion to the King of Sweden, and has placed its entire army in a ſtate of active and immediate operation.

It is certain, that the Emperor Francis, though deprived of many branches of the ancient Houſe of Auſtria, has ſtill left an immenſe population; and that the moſt active exertions have been made, under the directions of his illuſtrious brother, the Arch Duke Charles, to place the army of Germany, in the higheſt ſtate of preparation for war.

It is certain that throughout the Italian coaſt, the Britiſh have a formidable maritime ſquadron; and that this force, joined by a conſiderable body of Engliſh and native troops, are enabled, and have frequently effected the moſt important operations againſt the French in that quarter.

It is certain, that Ruſſia has augmented her effective troops to the number of 500,000 men; that the moſt able and experienced Generals have been placed at the head of her armies; that at this moment, ſhe has a very large force encamped on the frontiers, and that very conſiderable detachments of troops had been embarked for Pomerania.

It is certain, that a formidable Coalition is now maturing in the North of Europe againſt France; that in this confederacy, will probably be joined, the great powers of England, Ruſſia, Pruſſia, Auſtria, Sweden, and Denmark; and that in the formation of this immenſe body, ſuch a ſpirit and union is expected to prevail, as ſhall eventually reſtore to Europe, that correct balance of power, which its peace and ſafety ſo neceſſarily requires.

It is alſo certain, that very formidable Expeditions are fitting out in England, for the avowed purpoſe of joining the Britiſh forces in the Mediterranean; of giving ſuccour to the King of Naples, and further acting in ſuch ſituations as events may render neceſſary.

PEACE

To all this body of evidence in favour of a protracted war; we have but one article to add, viz.

Lord Lauderdale remained at Paris on the 17th September.

[*Boſton Gazette.*]

Waſhington City, Nov. 5.

The honourable DAVID M. ERSKINE, Envoy Extraordinary and Miniſter Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majeſty to the United States, was on Monday received by the Secretary of State, and by him preſented to the Preſident of the United States.

On the ſame day, the honourable ANTHONY MERRY, Eſquire, late Envoy Extraordinary and Miniſter Plenipotentiary from the ſame court, took leave of the Preſident.

Extract of a letter from General Wilkinſon, dated Rapids of Red River, Sept. 19, 1806.

——"My orders, and the conduct of the Mexicans, are ſo much at variance, and the Spaniſh commander, at the head of 1500 or 1800 men, has treated the ſtrong remonſtrances of governor Claiborne and colonel Cuſhing with ſuch ſlight, after having traverſed the territory eaſt of the Sabine, where he has taken his neareſt poſt, and menaced our eſtabliſhment at Natchitoches; that I foreſee an inevitable appeal to arms in the courſe of twelve days, if the Spaniards ſhould not recede, or I receive counter orders.—And as governor Herrara is an officer who has riſen by his ſword, and is reputed a man of great pride and ſpirit, I think it probable he will adhere to his ſolemn promiſe to maintain and defend his maſter's territorial pretenſions to a point within ſeven miles of one poſt, and fifty eaſt of the Sabine.

"Under theſe circumſtances, but with a ſolemn determination to drain the cup of conciliation before I draw the ſword, I have called for about 700 militia, which is the ſum total I am to expect from this and the Miſſiſſippi territories, to be aſſembled at Natchitoches the firſt proximo.

A letter to the editor of the Norfolk Herald, from a reſpectable gentleman in Camden, (N. C.) dated October 27, ſays,

"This place never was ſo univerſally ſickly before. Owing to the immenſe quantity of water which has fallen within a few months, the ague and fever, bilious and nervous fever have viſited every family, and almoſt every being. Some families are entirely laid up, there not being enough in health to nurſe the ſick. Five died the other day within two or three miles diſtance.—Mr. and Mrs. Wright and two children, and Miſs Dickſon, have been ſick, and our repreſentative has been ſeverely attacked with a nervous complaint, and although the moſt violent ſymtoms have abated, he is ſcarcely ever clear of a fever, ſick and weak ſtomach; in fact, he will have a tedious time of it, if he recovers. I wiſh we had one of your phyſicians here; we are very much in want of a ſkilful practitioner.—Unleſs the weather ſhould ſoon become cool and fair, I do not know what will become of us all."

Virginia mode of curing Hams.

Rub each ham with two teaſpoons full of ſalt petre, and let them remain for 8 or 10 hours, then mix brown ſugar with fine ſalt, till the ſalt is brown, and rub each ham well with this mixture, and pack them down in a tight caſk; ſprinkling ſalt very lightly over every layer: let them remain for 12 or 14 days, then unpack them, and put thoſe that were on the top, at the bottom, and any pickle which they made, pour over them, and in two weeks more they will be fit to ſmoke.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The lines of Dr. J. de N. are intended for next week.—

But VERSUS's addreſs to the muſes is not entitled to the ſame treatment: for it is a ſtanding rule with us, never to introduce a piece to our readers which we cannot underſtand.

CYRICUS, be perſuaded not to meddle with things too high.

PRIVADO's eſſay is inadmiſſible.

DESPONDENS, fain would we remove the gloomy tincture of thy mind; but we do not think that would be accompliſhed by preſenting thy reveries to the public.

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